



# **London Borough of Waltham Forest**

## **Food & Drink Policy**

**Early Years, Childcare & Business Development Service**

London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) Early Years, Childcare & Business Development Service have written this document to help you write a food and drink policy for your setting.

This document is for reference only and you must adapt it to reflect the service your setting offers. To download guidance on other policies and procedures go to <https://thehub.walthamforest.gov.uk/>

Whenever we say parents in this document we mean parents and carers and whenever we say child we mean children and young people aged 0 to 19 years old (up to 25 years old for young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND)).

## **Aim**

Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious. Snack and meal times are an important part of the day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. What do you do at snack and meal times? Do you provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs? Do you meet the safeguarding and welfare requirements on food and drink?

## **Points to consider**

Before a child starts at your setting, you must ask parents about their child's special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that the child has, and any special health requirements? Providers must record and act on information from parents and carers about a child's dietary needs.

- Where will you record information about each child's dietary needs that you have found out through talking with their parents on each child's admission form? Do you record this information on each child's registration record and do parents sign the record to show that it is correct?
- Do you regularly check with parents that your records of their children's dietary needs including any allergies, are up to date? Do parents sign the updated record to show that it is correct?
- Do you display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff and volunteers know about them? What systems will you use to make sure that children only get food and drink which meets their dietary needs and their parents' wishes? For example, will you have a photograph of each child (that parents have given written permission for) with a list of their dietary needs?
- Do you plan menus in advance and involve children and parents in the planning?
- Do you display menus of your meals and snacks for parents to see?
- How do you provide healthy and nutritious meals and snacks that do not have large quantities of fat, sugar, salt, artificial additives, preservatives or colourings?
- How will you include foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones? For example, through:
  - discussions with parents
  - research by staff

- getting information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, and about food allergies.
- How do you take account of this information when you are providing food and drinks?
- Do staff show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies? For example, staff do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child or make a child feel singled out because of their diet or allergy.
- How do you organise meal and snack times so they are social occasions that children and staff take part in? Do you use meal and snack times to help children develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves? For example, by providing children with utensils which are appropriate for their ages and stages of development
- There must be an area which is adequately equipped to provide healthy meals, snacks and drinks for children as necessary.
- There must be suitable facilities for the hygienic preparation of food for children, if necessary including suitable sterilisation equipment for babies' food.
- Providers must be confident that those responsible for preparing and handling food are competent to do so. In group provision, all staff involved in preparing and handling food must receive training in food hygiene.
- Do you provide information about allergenic ingredients used in food provided by you. There are 14 major allergens which you need to declare on your menus. More information is available from The Foods Standards Agency [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk).
- To meet parents' wishes, will you offer children arriving early in the morning, and/or staying late, an appropriate meal or snack?
- Do you tell parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities you have available? Will you give parents, who provide food for their children, information about healthy food options and suitable containers for food?
- Do you have rules about children not sharing and swapping their food with one another in order to protect children with food allergies? Do you make these rules clear to staff and children in your setting. For example, with a sign that says, 'We operate a nut free zone'.
- Do you follow the voluntary food and drink guidelines for early years settings set by the Children's Food Trust – Eat Better, Start Better Programme, [www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk](http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk). Have you signed up to follow the guidelines?
- Do you give parents daily written information about their child's feeding routines, what they have eaten and drunk that day and their food preferences?
- Do you provide formula milks of parents' choice, and how will you make sure you follow the correct sterilisation processes and the manufacturer's instructions when making the milk?
- Do you follow the guidance set out by the Foods Standards Agency on the safe preparation, storage and handling of powdered infant formula?

## **Access to drinking water**

Fresh drinking water must be available and accessible at all times

How will you make sure that fresh drinking water is always available for the children? Can children independently serve themselves using the jug and disposable cups you provide or their own water bottles or beakers that have been provided by their parents? Do staff think about factors that will affect how much children need to drink such as physical activity, temperature and so on? Make sure you offer water to children frequently.

You will need to think about the following:

- Where the water is located.
- Will children have their own named cups?
- How will you make sure babies have sufficient intake of fluids?
- Who checks that the children have the correct cup?
- Who checks that the cups are filled?
- Are there jugs of water available?
- Who fills these jugs?
- Are cups used?
- How are they washed?
- How do you make sure a clean cup is used each time?
- How do you check that all children know where the water is?
- How do you make sure that children can access that water whenever they want?
- How do you check that all children have enough drinks during the day?

## **Individual children's dietary needs records**

You must record and act on information from parents about their child's dietary needs.

When meeting parent's wishes about food and drink, think about:

- children's feelings, for example they may feel uncomfortable about their particular needs
- getting information and advice about special diets and food allergies
- ways of making sure all staff are fully informed.

The Ofsted inspector may want to see:

- the children's records that show their dietary needs
- how you will provide food and drink for these children
- how you find out about, and meet, children's dietary needs
- the arrangements you make when parents provide food and drink for their child.

You may find it helpful to tell parents about your food and drink procedures and policies. For example, that you check lunchboxes for unsafe items, because children may swap their food and some of those children may have allergies.

What are your arrangements if parents forget to bring lunches, do not provide enough food or children do not eat what they have been given?

You should display the children's individual dietary requirements in the kitchen so all the staff are aware. Photos could be included. This should not be seen by anyone else.

## Useful resources and websites

Food Standards Agency

[www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk) [www.eatwell.gov.uk](http://www.eatwell.gov.uk)

<http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/>

- Welfare Food Scheme – children under five years to receive free of charge, 189ml (one third of a pint) of milk each day they attend approved day care facilities for two hours or more. Tel: 08707 20 30 63
- Guidance for health professionals on safe preparation, storage and handling of powdered infant formula- department of health- food standards agency.